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New Brunswick students visit Hungary

NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ (June 21, 2017) – As part of the New Brunswick Sister Cities Association educational and cultural exchange program, four Woodrow Wilson School students, two New Brunswick staff members, and a New Brunswick firefighter and his son recently traveled to the central European nation of Hungary.

There, the group spent the first day of its visit in the historic capital city, Budapest, and the remaining eight days of its stay in the renowned cultural center of Debrecen – with which New Brunswick has enjoyed a 25-year sister city relationship.

The four students who represented Woodrow Wilson School during this year's cultural exchange trip were Ashley Caldwell, Erin Eckert, Sheila Nunez-Duran, and Levanía Velsaco-Uscamaita.

"Any trip to a foreign destination is likely to be a powerful educational experience," noted Dr. Aubrey Johnson, superintendent, New Brunswick Public Schools. "For years to come, these four Woodrow Wilson students will be able to talk about visiting historic places that very few Americans have seen."

Accompanying the students as chaperones were Woodrow Wilson School teacher Annamaria Papp and Woodrow Wilson School Media Specialist Michael Leone.

Also joining the trip was New Brunswick firefighter Fred Obado and his son, Madden Obado. The Obado family has a long history of active involvement with the New Brunswick Sister Cities Association.

Encouraging involvement in educational, political, cultural, and economic activities, the New Brunswick Sister Cities Association works to build mutually-beneficial, cross-cultural relationships with its sister city.

Photos of the New Brunswick students visiting Hungary are [available here](#).

About New Brunswick Public Schools

The New Brunswick, NJ public school district consists of two high schools (New Brunswick High School and Health Sciences Technology High School), a middle school (New Brunswick Middle School) and nine elementary schools (Lincoln, Lincoln Annex, Livingston, Lord Stirling, McKinley, Redshaw, Roosevelt, Paul Robeson Community School for the Arts, and Woodrow Wilson schools). The New Brunswick Public Schools offer a comprehensive educational program for students in grades pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade and serve more than 10,000 students.

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For New Brunswick's students, P-Tech public-private partnership offers compelling, STEM-related educational and career opportunities

Program provides associate degree along with high school diploma, plus connections with leading companies

NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ (Dec. 3, 2018) – For New Brunswick students, it can be a springboard to professional success.

When New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy announced last Tuesday (Nov. 27) that New Brunswick Public Schools – along with the Paterson and Burlington City school districts – would receive grants to implement the P-TECH (Pathway in Technology Early College High School) education model, he set in motion a program that will provide select students with a wealth of new opportunities. These include the chance to earn an associate degree in parallel with high school graduation, and to participate in internship and mentee relationships connected to leading prospective employers.

P-TECH is a STEM-based, public-private partnership co-developed by IBM, which is intended to establish a clear pathway from high school, to college, to a career. New Brunswick Superintendent Dr. Aubrey Johnson already has plenty of ideas about how his district will utilize the program, which in New Brunswick Public Schools will focus on engineering.

“Many of our students are interested in careers in science, technology, engineering, and math, but until now, the path toward the necessary instruction – not to mention finding a job – hasn’t been clear,” Johnson says. “But this model changes all that. Now, there will be a clearly defined process for our students that can actually conclude with potentially being hired by one of the exceptional companies located in and around New Brunswick. I’m extremely appreciative of this opportunity that’s been presented to our district.”

Specifically, approximately 30 New Brunswick High School 9th graders will begin the P-TECH program in September of 2019. As they progress toward high school graduation following their senior year, they’ll be taking STEM-focused, college-level courses. The end result will be that when they graduate from New Brunswick High School, they’ll also be earning an associate degree from Middlesex County College in a specialized field.

And they’ll do so without incurring any tuition costs. That expense will be entirely covered by the program.

“It’s no secret that a primary barrier separating some students from college-level courses and an eventual degree is affordability,” Johnson notes. “The P-TECH program not only will provide college-level instruction to some very capable, talented students, but it will do so without forcing them into tuition debt.

And there’s even more to P-TECH. High schoolers participating in the program will have a variety of internship and mentee opportunities related to a range of New Brunswick-area companies. Specifics are pending, but the school district and city already maintain a number of industry partnerships, and we’re looking forward to developing additional relationships of this type.

“As an example, the district has already incorporated Edwards Engineering into the program, and we’re in discussions with many others,” Johnson explains. “Through experiences outside the classroom, they’ll provide P-TECH students with a chance to learn a great deal about the intricacies and nuances of professional environments. And some of these students may even be able to start careers with the companies they’re interning with.”

The P-TECH model already has been effectively implemented in eight states outside of New Jersey – Colorado, Connecticut, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, New York, Rhode Island, and Texas -- as well as in several countries.

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New Brunswick Public Schools task force analyzing serious challenge of chronic absenteeism

Students, parents, teachers, administrators working together to identify solutions

NEW BRUNSWICK (April 19, 2018) – Being absent for just two days each month means a student will miss 10 percent of the entire school year – enough to negatively impact that student’s academic performance.

It’s sobering information, and a clear demonstration that chronically absent students are at a tremendous educational disadvantage, one from which many of them will never recover. And, it’s why New Brunswick Public Schools has initiated a district-wide program to address head-on the issue of students missing school.

The Chronic Absenteeism Task Force is focused on the crucial, academic need for students from Pre-K to high school to attend class on a consistent, daily basis. The group has held three meetings, beginning in January, and participants – who joined the task force based on an open invitation extended by the school district – include students, parents, teachers, staff, and administrators.

“Everyone who’s a member of this task force has learned a great deal – beginning with our focus on the specific, unique needs of New Brunswick’s students and their families,” explains Dr. Aubrey Johnson, superintendent, New Brunswick Public Schools. “We’ve already analyzed academic and attendance data at the grade, school, and district levels, while also reviewing statewide information. Like many other important issues, there’s a lot to consider – and, there are no easy answers.”

Initial research conducted by the task force, which is functioning as an ongoing initiative, indicates that chronic absenteeism in New Brunswick’s schools is most prevalent at both ends of the age spectrum – in Pre-K and at the high school. Of note, neither gender, ethnicity, nor English language proficiency have been shown to have significant impact on absenteeism rates.

Following its initial three meetings, the task force – overseen by Keira Scussa, the district’s assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction – is focused on three areas of specific need, families, students and school, and community. Detailed action plans are currently being prepared related to each of these groups. When these are finalized, they’ll be combined into a single, comprehensive, district-wide action plan for the 2018-19 school year.

“The task force represents a district-wide commitment to addressing an important issue, and we’ve gotten off to an excellent start,” Scussa says. “The action plan will be invaluable for the coming school year, but it can’t exist in a vacuum. We also need to review and possibly update attendance policies and facilitate the further education of students’ families. As a district, we’ll do what’s necessary to ensure our students are in school each day.”

To provide as many New Brunswick families as possible details on the task force’s progress, regular updates and new findings are being shared via the school district’s social media channels.

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One Chromebook for every New Brunswick middle school student:
Dramatic initiative to enhance at-home learning

Free, at-home Internet; 2,300 laptops for more than 2,000 students

NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ (April 30, 2019) – Thousands of New Brunswick students have received new Chromebook laptops – for use both at home and in school – through a comprehensive New Brunswick Public Schools program.

Specifically, each of the district's 2,056 students in grades six through eight (along with students in grades three through five in two district schools) are being given one of a total shipment of 2,300 Hewlett-Packard brand units (model G6, featuring 11-inch displays), along with the ability to access the Internet from their residence, and anywhere else in the city, at no cost. It's a program that will streamline and fundamentally enhance how the students learn.

"This will pay tremendous dividends for our school district," said New Brunswick Mayor Jim Cahill. "Through coordination with Optimum Lightpath, we've ensured that all students in the program will be able to connect to the internet for free, anywhere in New Brunswick. It is an exciting educational opportunity for our students and a resource that will have a positive impact on their learning habits."

Distribution of the Chromebooks to the district's middle schoolers – who are based in New Brunswick Middle School, Paul Robeson Community School for the Arts, McKinley Community School, Woodrow Wilson Elementary School, and the Lincoln Annex School – began on February 4 and is nearly completed.

"Our technology objective is investing in a tool that will improve student learning," said Dr. Aubrey Johnson, New Brunswick's superintendent of schools. "The use of technology is entwined in our daily lives, so when technology education is extended from the classroom to the home, it provides more possibilities for student learning. In order to better prepare and empower our students, we must create an environment that ensures they have immediate access to an abundance of quality information that will make their education more engaging, lead to learning at a quicker rate, increase collaboration among their peers and teachers, and provide connections to the real world. Simultaneously, we need to ensure technology will be used the right way and provide teachers appropriate professional development that will enhance teaching and learning both at school and at home."

Andrew Levine, the district's director of Technology and Innovation, said: "The primary difference now is that students will have the Chromebooks at their disposal for homework and studying. They'll be able to collaborate remotely with teachers, who in turn now have a new, more effective means of providing instructional content. This is a different and better learning model."

Prior to distribution of the Chromebooks, the district conducted a pilot program to identify and iron out glitches in the system. In addition, there has been a training program for teachers, and all students have received instruction on remaining safe when they use the devices away from school.

"We emphasize good digital citizenship – the concept of treating others with respect and remaining on-task when they're online," said Carla Segarra, the district's supervisor of Instructional Technology. "In addition,

we provide web content filters to prevent students from accessing inappropriate sites that won't contribute to their education. These Chromebooks represent a significant educational step forward, and with training and filtering, we're working to ensure the children remain safe whenever they use them."

The school district paid an approximate total of \$800,000 for the 2,300 laptops. Annual internet fees will be approximately \$30,000, or \$1 per month for each student.

"This initiative represents an exceptional opportunity for our district and its students to extend education beyond the classroom and into the home," said Patricia Sadowski, a New Brunswick Board of Education member. "It literally is an enhanced model for learning."

Board of Education Member Benito Ortiz noted: "The availability of these Chromebooks will provide our students dramatically expanded connectedness to the wide world beyond New Brunswick. And the more you can see, the more perspectives you can become aware of, the more knowledgeable you can become."

Board of Education President Dr. Dale Caldwell added: "This approach redefines the overall classroom experience. Learning is extended far beyond schools' walls, and students have the opportunity to learn on their own."

Distribution of Chromebooks to New Brunswick students in other grades is currently in a planning phase.

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[\(Click here for high resolution photo album\)](#)

Expansion of ongoing partnership between Big Brothers Big Sisters and New Brunswick Public Schools

Program moves into Livingston Elementary; High School program continues

NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ (Jan. 15, 2020) – It's another big step forward.

A total of 13 third, fourth, and fifth grade students from New Brunswick's Livingston Elementary School – all of whom were enrolled by their families – are now engaged in mentoring relationships with six select New Brunswick High School students. This arrangement represents an expansion of the ongoing program between [New Brunswick Public Schools](#) and [Big Brothers Big Sisters of Coastal & Northern New Jersey](#), which began during the 2018-2019 school year, when 18 district high school students were mentored by St. Peter's University Hospital staff members.

"Our district's relationship with Big Brothers Big Sisters can change young people's lives," explains Dr. Aubrey Johnson, superintendent of New Brunswick Public Schools. "That's why we're so excited about it expanding to include some of our elementary school students. This program enables children who are facing adversity of various types to engage in a professionally-supported, one-on-one relationship with a strongly positive role model."

The Livingston Elementary School phase of the program – which kicked-off in November and will conclude in June 2020 – takes place every other week at the elementary school and features Big Brothers Big Sisters staff facilitating all mentoring sessions. The program with St. Peter's University Hospital – which has featured presentations in the various hospital departments, hands-on tours, and various demonstrations – continues apace.

"Our organization has several mentoring program models, with one of the most effective being when a child interacts with their high school Big Brother or Big Sister right at school," says BBBS Executive Director

William Salcedo. “We have tremendous confidence in the potential of student leaders at New Brunswick High School to step up to the plate and inspire younger students as they help guide them on the right path. We look forward to serving more youth in New Brunswick through these two mentoring programs that will ignite the potential in every child we serve.”

Additional details on the program are available by contacting info@bbbsmmc.org or calling 732.544-2224.

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**New Brunswick Public Schools superintendent recognized as
2020 New Jersey Seal of Biliteracy Superintendent of the Year**

Dr. Aubrey Johnson honored for active support of biliteracy education



[\(Click here for high resolution image\)](#)

NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ (April 28, 2020) – New Brunswick Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Aubrey Johnson has been named “2020 New Jersey Seal of Biliteracy Superintendent of the Year” by the New Jersey Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages / New Jersey Bilingual Educators, Inc. (NJTESOL/NJBE). The honor recognizes Johnson’s active support for those who are learning English and his understanding of how they contribute to their schools and communities.

In particular, the NJTESOL/NJBE celebrates Johnson’s commitment to developing a district-wide pathway to biliteracy through bilingual and dual language programs. This includes the school district’s implementation of the New Jersey State Seal of Biliteracy, a New Jersey Department of Education designation that recognizes high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in speaking, reading, listening to and writing in one or more world languages, in addition to English.

“New Brunswick is a vibrant, diverse community, and our students speak more than 40 different languages,” said New Brunswick Board of Education Vice President Dr. Dale Caldwell. “This award is a testament to Dr. Johnson’s ongoing efforts to ensure that those students of ours who are in the process of learning English have the resources and support they need to succeed.”

In addition to providing employers and universities with an ideal way to identify individuals with outstanding biliterate skills, the Seal of Biliteracy also helps students to development crucial, 21st century communication abilities, while encouraging the overall study of languages and affirming the value of diversity.

“It’s an absolute honor to receive this award,” Johnson added. “I’m certain – given the ongoing support of our school district and the New Brunswick community – that we can continue providing opportunities that will ensure that our graduates are college, workforce, and career ready.”

Appointed superintendent of New Brunswick Public Schools in 2015, Johnson earned his doctorate from Seton Hall University in 2017. He holds a bachelor’s from Northeastern University, and a master’s from New Jersey City University.

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New Brunswick Public Schools chosen for NJ Second Language Learning Regional Model Programs Initiative

District to serve as a resource for other schools throughout state

NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ (June 16, 2020) – New Brunswick Public Schools has been chosen as a 2020-2022 participant in the New Jersey Second Language Learning Regional Model Programs Initiative. The honor recognizes New Brunswick's SIFE (Students with an Interrupted Formal Education) program for outstanding contributions in meeting the educational needs of English Language Learners (ELLs), and designates New Brunswick as a resource for other districts throughout New Jersey for a two-year period.

Developed by the New Jersey Department of Education, the initiative will provide educators with firsthand access to exemplary second language practice for ELLs. As representatives of a model program, New Brunswick Public Schools administrators and teachers are authorized to engage in dialogue about issues of mutual concern and discuss the potential for future collaboration regarding curriculum development projects and professional development initiatives.

"This award is particularly gratifying, because it recognizes the efforts both of our district's outstanding ELL teachers and our diverse student community – which includes speakers of 29 different languages," says Director of Bilingual & ESL Dr. Andrea Fontenez. "It's exciting that we'll be able to take our successes and share them directly with other school districts across the state."

To recognize New Brunswick Public Schools and other districts selected for inclusion in the program, the New Jersey Second Language Learning Regional Model Programs Initiative held a virtual ceremony on June 15 via Skype.

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New Brunswick Public Schools chooses all-virtual instruction format for first two marking periods of 2020-21 school year

NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ (August 13, 2020) – Based on New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy’s August 12 announcement that school districts may delay in-person learning related to concerns about safety standards, New Brunswick Public School Board of Education has authorized a plan to be submitted to the NJDOE to educate students through virtual learning for the first two marking periods of the 2020-2021 school year.

A decision regarding the year’s third and fourth marking periods will be made at a future date.

“Ideally, we’d like to provide an in-person learning environment beginning this September; however, we’re facing a situation that’s far from ideal,” explained Dr. Aubrey Johnson, the school district’s superintendent. “We’re going to err on the side of caution and request to begin the year using the remote-learning model that we utilized successfully from March through the end of school in June. There will be instances that in-person instruction will occur for students who require related services that cannot be delivered effectively through virtual instruction.”

Specific details about individual student schedules, the structure of the all-virtual school day, and additional professional learning are in development and will be announced as quickly as possible.

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New Brunswick Public Schools joins Verizon Innovative Learning, providing students with Internet access, devices, technology

Three district schools to participate beginning in 2021-22 school year

BRUNSWICK, NJ (Feb. 16, 2021) – New Brunswick Public Schools has joined [Verizon Innovative Learning](#), Verizon's education initiative that addresses barriers to digital inclusion and is a key program under [Citizen Verizon](#), the company's responsible business plan for economic, environmental and social advancement. Sixth through eighth grade students in Lincoln Annex School, McKinley Community School, and New Brunswick Middle School will participate in the program, beginning with the 2021-'22 school year.

In partnership with Digital Promise, Verizon Innovative Learning equips every student and teacher at select middle and high schools across America with a device and up to a four-year data plan. In addition to free technology and access, schools will be provided with extensive professional development and support, along with the opportunity to engage in powerful teaching and learning that leverages technology in and out of the classroom.

Launched in 2012, the program has now reached more than 212,000 students and 14,000 teachers across 264 middle and high schools. The trio of New Brunswick schools are among 148 new schools joining Verizon Innovative Learning, bringing the program to more than 400 middle and high schools nationwide.

In addition to free mobile devices and accompanying 30GB 4G LTE data plans, participating schools will be assigned a full-time coach to train teachers in effectively integrating technology into their lessons.

"The past year has demonstrated that communication technology is an essential component of a complete and successful educational experience," noted Dr. Aubrey Johnson, superintendent of New Brunswick Public Schools. "This program will give our students access to the very latest tech offerings, while providing our educators with outstanding professional development opportunities. We're delighted to be connected with Verizon Innovative Learning."

Verizon Innovative Learning is driving academic improvements as a result of the initiative.* In fact, 59 percent of Verizon Innovative Learning students believe assignments are easier when using a device, and 54 percent believe having the device improved their confidence in the things they can do. Moreover, Verizon Innovative Learning teachers felt more prepared for distance learning thanks to the initiative, with 92 percent reporting that Verizon Innovative Learning helped prepare them to teach remotely.**

"Verizon is proud to welcome New Brunswick Public Schools to the Verizon Innovative Learning program (VILS)," said Braxton Plummer, director of state government affairs at Verizon. "Through this transformative program, we are working to increase digital inclusion and enable students to acquire the skills they need to thrive in a digital world. In particular, STEM is key in education and the workforce, and VILS will be a great resource for the students of New Brunswick's public school system."

To date, Verizon has invested over \$535 million in market value toward STEM education efforts in support of digital inclusion, impacting more than 450,000 students nationwide.

* Source: Westat (2019). Verizon Innovative Learning Schools Survey Result Dashboard Dec 2019

***Source: Westat (2020): Verizon Innovative Learning Teacher Survey June 2020*

About Verizon Innovative Learning

Verizon Innovative Learning, Verizon's education initiative targeting Title 1 schools in partnership with Digital Promise, addresses barriers to digital inclusion. It's a key program under Citizen Verizon, the company's responsible business plan for economic, environmental and social advancement. The program provides free 1:1 devices, free internet access and a technology-driven curriculum with the goal to transform the learning experience. Through exposure to cutting-edge technology, the program enables students to develop the skills, knowledge, and confidence needed to build an innovative workforce of the future. Since 2012, Verizon Innovative Learning has committed a total of \$535 million in STEM education efforts in support of digital inclusion. In 2019, Verizon launched its first 5G-enabled Verizon Innovative Learning classroom, with the goal of 100 in the coming years. The company is committed to providing 10 million youths with digital skills training by 2030. Learn more at CitizenVerizon.com.

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VIRTUAL EVENT: Three New Jersey Public School Districts Join Verizon Innovative Learning

NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY | APRIL 30, 2021—Three New Jersey public school districts—Jersey City Public Schools, New Brunswick Public Schools and Trenton Public Schools—have joined Verizon Innovative Learning, Verizon’s education initiative addressing barriers to digital inclusion and a key program under Citizen Verizon, the company’s responsible business plan for economic, environmental and social advancement. The program equips every student and teacher at nine middle schools in these districts with a device and up to a four-year data plan, and provides extensive teacher professional development to support powerful learning that leveraging technology in and out of the classroom.

To officially announce the districts’ participation, Verizon and Digital Promise will host a virtual event on **Tuesday, May 4, at 10 a.m.** The event will feature remarks from **elected officials, school district leaders and Verizon and Digital Promise representatives**, as well as a panel discussion highlighting how the Verizon Innovative Learning Schools program leverages technology to transform the learning experience and ensure New Jersey students are prepared with the digital skills needed to put them on a path to success.

“It’s exciting to have two Jersey City public schools selected to join the Verizon Innovative Learning program, furthering efforts to expand opportunities for our youth, especially in STEM programming and interactive technology,” said Jersey City Mayor Steven M. Fulop. “The program will transform students’ learning experiences, enhance teacher professional development, and enable a seamless learning environment for student academic enrichment and success.”

“The Verizon Innovative Learning Schools program pushes the teaching and learning environments far beyond the classroom walls,” said New Brunswick Mayor James Cahill. “Connectivity and access to the limitless world of information are key to future successes for teachers and students alike. Digital devices play a critical role in the teaching process. Equipping both students and teachers with these state-of-the-art tools makes that process efficient, effective and exciting. The Verizon Innovative Learning Schools program makes this possible.”

“We don’t want the unprecedented educational challenges posed by COVID-19 to drive our urban students further behind their peers in other areas,” said Trenton Mayor W. Reed Gusciora. “Thanks to the Verizon Innovative Learning Schools program, four Trenton schools will be empowered with technology and STEM-focused curriculum that will help those students overcome those education hurdles and develop a passion to pursue high-demand fields well into the future.”

The nine schools participating in Verizon Innovative Learning are:

- Jersey City Public Schools: Joseph H. Brensinger School and Mahatma K. Gandhi School
- New Brunswick Public Schools: Lincoln Annex, McKinley Community School, and New Brunswick Middle School

- Trenton Public Schools: Dunn Middle School, Hedgepeth Williams Middle School of the Arts, Joyce Kilmer School, and Luis Munoz-Rivera Middle School

Members of the media are invited to attend the event. Please click [here](#) to register.

WHAT: New Jersey Verizon Innovative Learning Virtual Event

WHEN: Tuesday, May 4—10 a.m.

WHERE: [Registration link](#)

WHO: Jersey City Public Schools, New Brunswick Public Schools and Trenton Public Schools

- Mayor W. Reed Gusciora, City of Trenton
- Mayor James Cahill, City of New Brunswick
- Councilwoman Mira Prinz-Arey, Jersey City
- Jersey City Public Schools Superintendent Franklin Walker
- New Brunswick Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Aubrey Johnson
- Verizon Director of State Government Affairs - NJ Braxton Plummer
- Verizon Innovative Learning Schools Executive Director Lydia Logan, Digital Promise
- District VILS Leads: Carla Segarra - New Brunswick; Michael Tofte -Trenton; Francine Luce - Jersey City

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Melissa Vega

[Please click here for hi-res photo](#)

QUITE AN HONOR – New Brunswick Public Schools’ bilingual educator Melissa Vega, who is based in New Brunswick Middle School, has been named the 2021-2022 Middlesex County Teacher of the Year by the New Jersey Department of Education. Vega, who has been a member of district faculty for 17 years, holds a master’s in curriculum and instruction, with a specialization in bilingual/bicultural education.

“This recognition is a tribute to the level of education our district provides to its bilingual learners,” Vega says. “What’s most rewarding for me, as an educator, is seeing our students work hard, steadily improve their English language skills, and ultimately thrive in whatever they choose to do.”

Vega is the second New Brunswick Public Schools educator to earn this county-level honor in the past three years. For 2019-2020, elementary health and physical education instructor Jen Olawski was named the Middlesex County Teacher of the Year.

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New Brunswick students transformed into historians through district-wide time capsule initiative

Educational opportunity provided by turbulence of 2021; will be unsealed a decade in the future



Within their time capsules (lower right), New Brunswick students included a wide variety of items.

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NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ (November 16, 2021) – It's a case of identifying educational opportunities in the midst of unsettling times.

During the spring of 2021, more than a year into the global, COVID-19 pandemic, a few months after insurrectionists stormed the U.S. Capitol, and with the criminal trial underway that stemmed from George Floyd's murder, educators in the New Brunswick public school district determined students needed a project to help them effectively process what was happening in the world around them. After a bit of brainstorming, they decided upon a true educational classic – the time-capsule.

Through this initiative, students in each of the districts' 12 schools identified, collected, and then encapsulated multiple small items to illustrate life during one of the more dramatic moments in modern American history. The polished, metal capsules used for the project are compact, with each featuring an interior measurement of 13 inches in length by four inches in diameter.

New Brunswick Public Schools' Supervisor of Humanities, Dr. Lennox H. Small, notes: "Winston Churchill once stated, 'History will be kind to me, for I intend to write it.' The global pandemic and the events of 2020-2021, social unrest, and economic uncertainty showed us that we all have a voice in how we record and memorialize these issues. Students saw firsthand that history was not solely for the intellectual elite trained by the academies. It was a moment for them to use their own voices and be contributing authors to one of the most revolutionary and transformative time periods in human history. As they reflect on this moment in history, the students will gain an indelible appreciation and understanding that they did not learn the concepts and events from a textbook, they helped create several chapters in the text to enlighten a new generation of scholars and global citizens."

Since May, district students have been busy creating and sealing their time capsules. Each will be reopened a decade in the future, during 2031. Until then, rather than being interred on the grounds of their

respective schools, the capsules are being stored above ground. Some are clearly visible within display cases, and each school will receive a plaque describing the project and its significance.

“When we thought about our students living through this pandemic, as well as some other truly historic events happening simultaneously, it was clear we needed to develop a project that would memorialize it for them,” explains Dr. Aubrey Johnson, Superintendent, New Brunswick Public Schools. “By having each school in our district create a time capsule, we allowed the students to shift from being learners to being historians. They’re as familiar with the unique circumstances of 2020 and 2021 as anyone else, and thinking about what might be preserved for future generations enables them to consider their world from a different perspective.”

Included among items sealed within the various schools’ time capsules are a wide variety of masks; students’ posters on the theme of justice and equality; and in-school notices related to the pandemic.

About New Brunswick Public Schools

The New Brunswick, NJ public school district consists of two high schools (New Brunswick High School and Health Sciences Technology High School), a middle school (New Brunswick Middle School) and nine elementary schools (Lincoln, Lincoln Annex, Livingston, Lord Stirling, McKinley, Redshaw, Roosevelt, Paul Robeson Community School for the Arts, and Woodrow Wilson schools). A comprehensive educational program for students in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade serves a student population of more than 10,000. New Brunswick Public Schools participates in the P-TECH (Pathways in Technology Early College High School) public-private partnership, which provides select students an opportunity to simultaneously earn both a high school diploma and an associate degree in Engineering or an Engineering-related field.

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